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CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM  
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MATERIALS FOR

SUPPORT GUATEMALA

2003

I. Characteristics and Effectiveness of Media.

A. Word-of-Mouth Propaganda and Films.

1. The two means of public information in Guatemala having the greatest audience effect are word of mouth and films. The former has been used by government agents and supporters to explain and popularize the Agrarian Reform Law.

B. Pamphlets, Folders, and News Sheets.

1. Pamphlets and folders reach a large element of middle and lower income groups. Despite the high rate of illiteracy and low standard of living, there has been in recent years a noticeable increase in publication and dissemination of books and pamphlets. The Ministry of Education is said to have printed 638,000 in the past four years. Most of the works published are of the pamphlet type and of inferior quality, both in content and appearance. Perhaps for that reason they get a wide circulation among the popular and/or revolutionary masses.

2. Communist propaganda has been circulated through the use of pamphlet and folder material. Most of it is attractive in format and fairly well printed, illustrated with good drawings, but the quality of paper is poor. Small-sized items are customary.

C. Newspapers and Magazines.

1. Newspapers, magazines, and radio are utilized primarily for political propaganda, both domestic and foreign, rather than for information purposes. Irresponsible inflammatory and libelous reporting is the rule rather than exception.

2. There are 59 registered newspapers and periodicals in Guatemala, with reported combined circulation of 202,370. The total number of readers may be three times this number. With two exceptions, all daily papers are printed and distributed in Guatemala City.

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-3. The total circulation of the independent, anti-communist, and anti-government press is approximately 40,000, while the circulation of the government-owned, government-controlled, and communist press is approximately 10,000. The government so far has allowed comparative freedom of the press and of expression. A check over the press summaries of the past two years indicates that the non-government, independent press, with its greater circulation, has carried a consistently large volume of criticism, challenge and accusations regarding communist penetration. This has not crystallized public opinion into action against the government, however. The explanation probably lies in a combination of causes: (a) lack of real fear and conviction regarding the imminence of foreign danger through Soviet communism because the USSR is remote; (b) relatively satisfactory economic conditions leading to desire to avoid disturbance to the status quo; (c) lack of cohesiveness and agreement on alternative national policies among the anti-communist and anti-government forces.

D. Conclusions.

1. Pamphlet material, for circulation through the media of anti-communist market women, students, and similar groups offers one of the best potentials for transmission of propaganda;
2. circular letters, enclosing pamphlet material, to military, lawyers and other professional men are suggested;
3. pamphlets and circular letters to women school teachers and to housewives also offer a way of reaching groups of rising importance in the political and economic life of the country;
4. the foregoing groups have been special targets of communist propaganda.

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## RADIO BROADCASTING

### A. Receiving Sets and Radio Audience Characteristics.

The total number of radio receiving sets in use in Guatemala is approximately 71,000, distributed among a population of about 3,000,000. This is a ratio of about two sets to every 100 persons. Most of these sets, however, are found in urban centers so that 68 per cent of all radio receiving sets in the country are distributed among 22.4 per cent of the population. The remaining 32 per cent of existing radio receiving sets is thinly and unevenly distributed among 77.6 per cent of the population. It was estimated in 1951 that about 5,000 receivers were located in public places, primarily in areas where few persons owned sets. About 95 per cent of all radios can receive both long- and short-wave transmissions.

For purposes of comparison, the distribution of radio receiving sets in neighboring countries is as follows: Cuba - 13 sets per 100 persons; Mexico - 5 sets per 100; Costa Rica - 4 sets per 100; El Salvador - 2 sets per 100; Nicaragua - 2 sets per 100; Honduras - 1 set per 100.

A further breakdown of the distribution of sets in Guatemala shows that approximately one-half million people, or 1/6th of the total population, have access to radio. It is estimated that about 90 per cent of all radios are in the Departamento de Guatemala, about 60 per cent in Guatemala City and environs, and about 8 per cent in Quezaltenango. The availability of electric power in small towns is a factor influencing the distribution of radio receiving sets.

The ownership of the limited radio receiving facilities is preponderantly among the rich, the prosperous commercial classes, some of the military, the professional and intellectual groups, and students. Servants in urban centers presumably listen in from time to time on their employers' sets. Campesinos and urban workers have occasional access to sets in cantinas and other public places.

The radio does not constitute an effective means of approach to the masses of agricultural workers and apparently reaches only a small number of urban workers. It is noted that Communist and pro-Communist organizations which have been capitalizing on their opportunities under the present government have not tried to use radio as a primary means of influencing opinion among native workers. The principal Communist

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drive has been by direct contact, largely through local agrarian committees. The importance placed on this means of contact is indicated by the fact that one thousand or more of these committees were reported active as of December, 1953.

On the other hand, the Arbenz government does utilize the official radio, "La Voz de Guatemala," in presenting the administration's view and stressing actions and policies of interest to workers. During labor disputes between Guatemalan workers and the United Fruit Company, spot comments and commentaries favoring the "workers" and the Nation's stand in the dispute with the "monopolistic company" were carried repeatedly. The government also brings pressure against radio stations carrying information contrary to its policies or interests.

While the Guatemalan masses are not habituated to radio listening as a main source of information, they probably consider it an authoritative source, and they may give wide word-of-mouth circulation to interesting rumors and news picked up from broadcasts heard in public places.

	<u>Total radio and Wired Sets</u>	<u>Radio Receiver Sets</u>		<u>Wired Sets</u>
		<u>Number Licensed</u>	<u>Number Unlicensed</u>	<u>Number Licensed</u>
Guatemala	71,000	71,000	-	Unknown

  

<u>Total Radio Receiver Sets</u>	<u>Estimated Percent</u>			<u>Estimated No. Equipped for Shortwave</u>
	<u>Long Wave</u>	<u>Medium Wave</u>	<u>Short Wave</u>	
71,000	Unknown		92	65,300

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Guatemala:

Geographical Distribution of Radio Sets

<u>Locality</u>	<u>Radio Sets</u>		<u>Population (1950)</u>
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Guatemala Dept.	42,600	60.0	15.8
Quezaltenango Dept.	5,700	8.0	6.6
Rest of country	22,700	32.0	77.6
TOTAL	71,000	100.0	100.0 (2,786,403)

Characteristics of Radio Owners

No information available.

Sources

Geographical distribution - Trade estimates, as of Dec. 31, 1951.

B. Audience Taste and Reactions.

From the foregoing, it must be assumed that radio broadcasts in Guatemala will be heard mainly by the propertied, commercial, professional, military and student classes. Probably there are many women listeners.

No analysis of the taste or susceptibilities of this audience is available. A US short-wave broadcasting station which receives frequent comments from Latin American listeners finds that a striking feature of these communications is the almost unanimous interest expressed in good music programs. Six letters received recently from Guatemala bear out this pattern.

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A survey of available recordings show that it probably is fairly difficult and quite expensive for radio broadcasting stations in the small Latin American countries to obtain collections adequate to sustain continuing good music programs. This fact, rather than audience taste, may explain the preponderance in Guatemalan broadcasts of "live" popular, regional music by local bands, as well as the time devoted to relatively mediocre recorded music.

All in all, it appears that programs based on folklore, aiming to identify present-day Indians with the glory of the ancient Maya, would fail to reach the Indians and would not be welcome to the moneyed classes who own most of the receiving sets. The latter people, although they may be descendants of caciques themselves, usually want to be identified with their European ancestors while admitting the splendor of the Maya heritage as a thing to one side, belonging to the past. ~~Many~~ **themes** from that heritage nevertheless evoke response, when applied in appropriate context.

Excerpts from comments received from several hundred Latin American listeners regarding US short-wave broadcasts heard in the area are given below. These excerpts consist mainly of comments on the programs. References to stamp collecting were common, but these have been omitted. About 10% of the letters contained words of praise for the US company which runs the station. These also have been omitted. The most striking feature of the letters is the almost unanimous interest in good music programs. A detailed study of the enclosure may indicate other patterns.

C Sabinas, Coahuila: I am completely satisfied with the programs which are designed along cultural lines and whose themes are concerned with the welfare of mankind in general.

C Sabinas Coahuila: A friend invited me to hear your broadcasts. It was a great pleasure to hear such noble programs.

Nueva Rosita, Coahuila: Your station is principally interesting for its music. My preference is for the classical, but I also enjoy popular melodies of the sweet type. Your interviews with Latin Americans, and your reading and commenting on listeners' letters are also good. In addition, your commentaries are interesting on any subject, except politics.

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Tepic, Nayarit: The following comments are both my own and those of my friends. First, congratulations on your good taste in choosing your music. I pray that you will continue to broadcast good music, particularly since the local programs are so bad. Your lectures and commentaries are also good, but couldn't they be shorter? Regarding news broadcasts - I don't think these would add anything since we already get news from other stations in the US, Canada and Argentina. I think it would be good to include programs giving the latest developments in the fields of art and literature.

Mexico DF: Your classical music programs give me stupendous satisfaction, both during and after your transmissions.

Saltillo, Coahuila: I wish your station a long life in view of the quality of your programs, especially their instructional and cultural aspects.

Naranjas: I congratulate you on your excellent record library. May you continue to delight your listeners with selections from it.

Mexico DF: You are to be highly congratulated on your wonderful, altruistic work. Your station is most welcome here because of the — excessive commercial propaganda on the local stations. Re your programming, I prefer classical music, particularly Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Borodin and Chopin. I think that news is a necessity, but please make the items short.

Sancti Spiritus: I do not think you could improve your cultural, musical and informational programs.

Havana: I have listened with satisfaction to your highly cultural programs.

Banes, Oriente: We listen to your station every day to enjoy your musical programs and cultural talks.

Manzanillo: I am a constant listener and much enjoy your classical music. I would prefer that you not broadcast news - we hear enough of that on other stations. However, I suggest that you might rebroadcast the United Nations programs which deal with individual countries, their customs, industrial development, etc. They are very pleasant and instructive.

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Guantanamo: Every day I listen to your station which is outstanding for the quality of the music.

San Jose: I like music and old masters. Modern, of any level, is the noise of cats and dogs. Nothing better than Liszt, Brahms, Bach, Wagner, Chopin, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, etc. I always tune in to stations which transmit classical music.

San Jose: I like your programs very much and hope they continue as they are. Some months ago a similar station began broadcasts and after a few weeks changed to dramas about the Iron Curtain.

San Rafael de Heredia: I take this opportunity to salute your marvelous station with its cultural programs and impartial commentaries.

San Jose: Your programs are outstanding. I am sure the majority of shortwave listeners are tired of political commentaries, commercial advertising, and common music such as mambos and worse.

Puntarenas: Your programs are very good, especially those related to good music.

Estado Miranda: This is the fifth time I have listened to the broadcast. I am an enemy of correspondence but in view of the quality of the programs, especially commentaries and the good music I must write you. I love concert music (Liszt, Mozart, Beethoven) and operas.

San Cristobal, Estado Tachira: I listen to your programs every day, and I particularly enjoy your good music.

Valencia: Congratulations on your cultural and good music programs. I listen daily.

Tegucigalpa: Apparently the horrible radio programs we are afflicted with here are a continental phenomenon. Anyway, the three hours from your station are my salvation.

Tela: I now consider the hour from 6-7 the best of the day since then I hear your beautiful music. I wonder if one day you could play some band music. I know Sousa marches don't compare with classical music,

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but I am sure they would please your Latin American listeners. Unfortunately my electric power only starts at 6 p.m. Honduras time so I don't hear the rest of your program.

Boaco: My family is immensely pleased with your programs, especially the musical part. We like Tchaikovsky, Ravel and Grieg.

Guayaquil: My family and I enjoy both your classical and popular music programs. We also like Argentine and Brazilian music. We are particularly interested in hearing scientific talks. These enchant us since they instruct us and let us learn about things of which we are completely ignorant.

Asuncion: My preference is for classical music, especially Chopin. I also enjoy popular music, except for the mambo. Gershwin is one of my favorites.

Yauco: I am interested in national and international subjects above all. Also in programs on all aspects of life in all cities of the earth. The history of music, programs of chamber music, and biographies of the most distinguished men of the New World, also would be good subjects. Finally there are many aspects of California history which would interest the people of Spanish America.

C. Broadcasting Stations and Current Situation of Broadcasting.

Despite the limited number of receiving sets in the country, Guatemala has 23 active radio stations. Three are government-owned. The most powerful station is the 10-kilowatt government-owned Voice of Guatemala. Many stations have long-, medium-, and short-wave equipment. Two use FM transmitters in portable units for remote-control broadcasting. There is no coordinated network.

All radio stations broadcast between 6 a.m. and 11 p.m.

Radio stations operate on temporary licences valid for six months. This system is a factor in making effective the extra-official pressure which frequently is put on to silence programs critical of the administration.

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The government transmitter, "La Voz de Guatemala" (TGWA/TGWB), is the most important, the best organized, and the only station heard with sufficient strength and regularity to warrant regular monitoring at VCB. The station operates under full government control and serves as the official broadcaster of government news, announcements, policies, and information.

The broadcasting pattern of TGW approximates that of an independently owned commercial station. The government utilizes it, however, to promote special policies or projects. Besides the regular radio fare and reports on government affairs, "La Voz de Guatemala" carries four complete newscasts compiled by "our own professional reporters from news gathered in European and world radio-telegraph news services." No particular news agency has been credited of late by this station, although the news formerly was gathered from the Guatemalan daily DIARIO DE LA MANANA.

This station also covers, by remote control, special events such as meetings and conferences held by the political parties, the labor unions, the "peace partisans," the democratic youth movement, and more recently, the anti-Communist movement's organizational efforts.

The station carries much news of the Central American and Caribbean countries, especially Cuba and the Dominican Republic, and has been an important instrument in promoting the "Organization of Central American States."

Under the Arbenz government, Guatemalan radio stations have operated uninterruptedly and free from excessive government control or interference. Pressure is exerted in varying ways, however, against lukewarm and anti-administration stations.

The latest available analysis (1951) of programs and operations of the government-owned station indicates the following:

1. Control:

a. Emergency Restrictions: The Government has found it necessary to invoke certain restrictive or control measures, as regards radio stations, only during periods when disorders have occurred and a national emergency has arisen.

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b. Political Coverage: The Arbenz Government has not imposed any special measures, nor passed any new laws which have greatly affected the radio stations' freedom of action which they have enjoyed in the past. On the other hand, at least outwardly, the Government has upheld and enforced the Electoral Code which make it mandatory for radio stations to make special time available to all political parties during a preelection political campaign.

Actually, the opposition, during the campaign for the Guatemala City mayoralty election which took place early in December 1951, was heard on the air for only two weeks prior to the election, and their speeches were much more subdued in tone and less vociferous in their denunciations than were the speeches for the pro-Government candidate. Prior to that, during time apparently allotted to the opposition, the announcer would state that this time had been set aside for them, after a brief pause would read the applicable section of the Electoral Code, and then would announce that due to the absence of representation from the opposition records would be played, without giving any explanation as to the reason for the failure of the opposition to appear.

No election returns or announcements that the anti-Communist opposition actually had won the election was made until at least forty-eight hours after the news was known from other sources, including a REUTERS despatch from Guatemala City. In the interim, music took the place of the usual newscast at 0100 GMT.

## 2. Domestic Services.

a. Broadcasting Pattern: Despite the complete domination of "La Voz de Guatemala" by the Government, it has developed its operation to such a point that its broadcasting pattern approximates that of an independently owned commercial station. However, the Government does utilize this station in promoting special policies or projects, and in presenting the administration's view. This was evident during the labor dispute between the Guatemalan workers and the United Fruit Company. Spot comments and commentaries favoring the "workers" and the Nation's stand in the dispute with the "monopolistic company" were carried repeatedly. The same form of attack and propaganda against the "unrelenting foreign-owned company which operates the International Railroad of Central America" was employed by the railroad workers union which demanded that the "IRCA" oust its vice president, and also rehire twenty-four workers who "had been fired without just cause."

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b. Anti-US Propaganda: "La Voz de Guatemala" freely permits and extends remote control facilities to, presentation of events during which anti-US elements are allowed to make vigorous attacks against the United States and its interest. During the important convention held to carry out a merger of the major Guatemalan labor organizations into a unified central body--a convention attended by President Arbenz himself--the Mexican Communist labor leader, Vicente Lombardo Toledano, viciously attacked the United States in one of the longest speeches carried by this station during 1951.

c. Anti-British: The British usually are included in attacks made by Guatemalan speakers or commentators against the "capitalists and imperialists who interfere in Guatemalan business and political affairs," and the station is used to promote the Government's desire for the return of British Honduras to Guatemala.

### 3. Foreign Services.

a. Anti-France: One-half hour weekly is allowed by "La Voz de Guatemala" for the "Committee for the Aid of the Spanish Republic" to broadcast a show entitled "For the Liberation of Spain." This program devotes most of its time to attacking the French Government, reiterating hope for the "liberation" of Spain. Whether or not the more fact that the time is given indicates sympathy of the Government or the radio which it controls with this movement is open to argument, but the fact remains that high Government officials, leading Guatemalan labor leaders and other prominent personages besides the exiled Spanish Republicans have often been guest speakers. The latter group has reported on the progress of the anti-France movement both within and outside of Spain. Indications that there would be a strong anti-France protest movement among factory workers in industrial cities was made by speakers on this program before the outbreak of the strikes in Barcelona and Pamplona. The show is beamed to "Spanish Republicans in Exile" on both continents.

On November 8, 1951, announcement was made that during November and December the Aid-to-the-Spanish-Republic program would be of only fifteen minutes' duration, but that the normal half-hour broadcast would be resumed in January.

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"The Beleze Hour": The program sponsored by "the free people of Guatemala who support the Belizans in their fight for freedom," is beamed to "Belize," the territory which the corrupt British imperialists erroneously call British Honduras." Highly inflammatory comment, usually following a single theme, is ready alternately in Spanish and in English by two announcers, with music setting off the different sections. The half-hour program is broadcast three times weekly.

D. Comment and Suggestions.

1. Radio broadcasts directed to the known listening audience can be a useful psychological weapon against Communism and Communists in Guatemala. This is an audience, however, which is already pretty well divided into those who already fear and distrust communism and those who are either convinced communists or who accept the thesis of the Arbenz Government that communism in Guatemala is a local affair, not under domination of foreign, specifically Soviet, communists.

2. Radio propaganda should be directed toward:

- a. Disproving the government's claim to the above effect with detailed factual information; (manufactured evidence is not necessary in this case as there is plenty of factual evidence)
- b. Discrediting intellectuals who have fallen for the Communist line;
- c. Warning intellectuals who may be used by Communists;
- d. Citing examples and praising intellectuals who have refused to be used by the Communists;
- e. Discrediting the government on grounds of inefficiency, incompetency, etc., particularly for its folly in allowing itself to be duped, deceived and trapped in its present unfavorable international situation by agents of international communism, sent to Guatemala from other countries for precisely that purpose;

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f. Building up the idea that there is no advantage in supporting this government which has already set its course toward inevitable destruction; the Communists will not let anything survive which they cannot dominate, once they have achieved a position of any influence whatever; this truth can be shown by tracing the history of the Communists in the Spanish Republic and after the Civil War: they broke up and destroyed all moderate leftist groups, betrayed every collaborator whom they could not absorb. They have done the same thing to the Spanish Circulos in Guatemala, Mexico, Cuba. (There is abundant evidence on this subject; it might be used to offset the time given by the official Guatemalan radio to Spanish Republican affairs.)

g. Reemphasizing the allegations that Col. Arana was assassinated— (and taken out of Arbenz' way) solely because of his opposition to communist influence in the government;

h. Praising the energy of the new generation of Latin American women who have gone into teaching, etc., but warning against the false attractions of extremism.

E. Entertainment Broadcasts to Support Propaganda.

1. The following program possibilities have been developed as though for productions in series. Although not used serially in the sense of regular periodic broadcasts, material collected on this basis can be organized easily, and can be used so as to give an impression of verisimilitude if the intention is to operate in the guise of a regular station.

2. The sampling of possible entertainment material also has been selected with the idea of appealing to the interest or taste of potential listeners at varying hours of the day.

3. In making a preliminary experimental selection of recordings it was concluded that a reasonable approach to the problem would be to imagine the attitude of the owner of a radio station in Guatemala, should he be provided with money and free entry through customs, which would allow him to select recordings in New York: he doubtless would try to satisfy and flatter the taste of listeners with "good music," but at the same time make selections likely to cause them to stay tuned in if they dialed into the middle of one of his broadcasts by chance or were regular listeners.

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4. Recordings of marimba music and music typical of Guatemala are very limited in quantity.

5. Recordings of mambo and other popular dance music of Caribbean flavor are abundant. None have been purchased so far, but some might be useful.

6. Good recordings of classical, semi-classical music by Spanish and Latin American composers as well as Russian, German, French, are readily available.

7. The cost of recordings is approximately \$50.00 for each five to six hours of playing time.

F. Program Suggestions.

1. Russian Composers: Prokofieff and Shostakovich

— Several Latin American listeners writing in comments on US short-wave broadcasts requested works by Borodin and Tchaikovsky; it can be assumed that works by other Russian composers would be appreciated.

Presentations of the music of Prokofieff and Shostakovich, with biographical notes interpolated, would be a fine vehicle for propaganda hitting at the theme of Soviet enslavement of artists. The experiences of Prokofieff and Shostakovich provide vivid illustrations of the political repression and exploitation of even Russia's greatest musicians under Soviet rule.

2. Poetry reading: Latin Americans, especially students and professors, take their culture seriously. Most Latin Americans love poetry and those who don't love it respect it. The Communist intellectuals have taken great advantage of this special predilection by exploiting the talent of Pablo Neruda and other poets who have lent their art to the Communist cause.

It might be possible to capitalize on this interest to get listeners and at the same time draw attention away from the Communist poets. A good criticism of literary deterioration of some of the poets and writers—who have prostituted their art to Communism might be prepared. Guatemala possesses an example in Otto Raul Leiva. Ana Louise Strong

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interviewed (and praised) him recently. Now the orthodox Communists say she is a "Yankee spy" (Tribuna Popular, 13 January 1954). A fine example of how fast an intellectual or poet can rise and fall on the perfidious wings of Soviet politico-literary fame.

Sample recording is a beautiful treatment of poems of Garcia Lorca with musical background; intended for illustration of technique only, not for broadcast, as the poet is identified with the extreme left of the Spanish Republic.

3. Religious appeal: The Catholic Church has designated 1954 as "Marian Year," i. e. a year of special veneration of the Virgin Mary, and has proclaimed certain indulgences in this connection. Programs dedicated to the religious patronesses and most famous manifestations of the Virgin in the Latin American countries has good possibilities in this connection.

Religious music interspersed with historical and legendary material on this subject can be provided.

4. Other series: (a) Music of famous cities; (b) Universities of the World; (c) Folk music of the world; (d) Spanish zarzuelas; (e) a composer series with selections of the works and biographical notes on the old masters.

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